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Wife of U-2 Spy Pilot Victim in Drug Mystery

BY ROBERT YOUNG

[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

Washington, April 20 — Mrs. Barbara Powers, wife of the U-2 spy plane pilot recently released from a Russian prison, was taken to a hospital today in a coma from what police said was an overdose of sleeping pills.

Mrs. Powers, 27, was reported in "very serious condition" when she was admitted to Georgetown university hospital in Washington. After treatment, hospital authorities said she was "in satisfactory condition and out of danger."

The hospital reported that Mrs. Powers was suffering from an "acute gastrointestinal upset," or acute indigestion. Washington police said, however, they were informed Mrs. Powers had swallowed about 28 barbiturate tablets this morning.

Living in Virginia

Mr. and Mrs. Powers have been living in an apartment in suburban Alexandria, Va., since shortly after the U-2 pilot's turn from Russia early this year: Powers was captured May 1, 1960, when his plane crashed inside Russia while on a high altitude photographic mission. He pleaded guilty to espionage and was sentenced to 10 years in prison. He was traded last Feb. 10 for Col. Rudolph I. Abel, master Russian spy serving a 30 year prison sentence in the United States.

Mrs. Powers, an attractive



Mrs. Barbara Powers

brunette, was taken first to the Alexandria hospital from her apartment. Her husband was with her. Hospital authorities would not disclose what Powers told them.

Took Tablets, Record Says

She was transferred in an ambulance to the Georgetown hospital in Washington, eight miles from Alexandria. The attending physician at Georgetown hospital said her stomach had been pumped when she arrived from the Alexandria hospital and he could neither confirm nor rule out an overdose of sleeping pills as the cause of her condition.

Washington police said Alexandria hospital records stated

Mrs. Powers swallowed about 28 barbiturate tablets.

Powers, 32, still is employed by the Central Intelligence agency, altho not as a pilot. A CIA spokesman said Powers told him his wife was ill with acute indigestion.

Mrs. Powers was present in the Moscow courtroom Aug. 19, 1960, when her husband was sentenced to prison as a spy. During his imprisonment, she lived in her home town of Milledgeville, Ga.

She joined her husband when he returned to the United States last Feb. 11. They were together about three weeks while the CIA interrogated Powers at a secret hideaway near Washington. They were married in 1954 and have no children.